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CURRENT LITERATURE.

BOOK REVIEWS.*

Vegetation der Erde.

THE VEGETATION of the Illyrian countries forms the topic of the fourth volume [†] of this splendid series of monographs edited by Engler and Drude. The area covered by the work ignores political and to some extent phytogeographic boundaries, embracing the field which Dr. Beck has for many years made peculiarly his own. In a general way the region under discussion corresponds to the ancient Roman province of Illyria, and includes Servia, Montenegro, and the western portion of European Turkey, as well as the southern part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. The Slavic tongues dominate in most of the Illyrian regions, and many of the best botanical workers have been natives. Among those prominent in phytogeographic study have been Visiani, Sendtner, Vandas, Baldacci, Pancić and Adamović. Since 1886 Beck has published many important papers which have amply fitted him for this monograph. The bibliography includes about 800 titles.

After a brief treatment of the geography and climatology, the formations are described in detail. Among the most interesting of the formations are the well-known Mediterranean evergreen forests and thickets, in which forms with broad leathery leaves (Schimper's sclerophylls) dominate. The peculiar evergreen thicket, known as the maqui or macchie, is the most typical of Mediterranean formations and does not depart far from the sea; among the character plants are the arbutus, laurel, myrtle, olive, evergreen oaks, Spartium, juniper. This unique vegetation is believed to be due to the unique climate, the winter being mild while the summer is hot and dry. In some places near the sea *Pinus halepensis* is a leading plant, preceding the maqui rather than following it. Woods are also composed of *Pinus nigra*, laurel, and various oaks. Vast areas are covered by rocky heaths, especially in limestone regions; under favorable conditions near the sea a rock heath is an early stage of the maqui.

In the interior the forests are dominated for the most part by deciduous

* BECK VON MANNAGETTA, DR. GÜNTHER RITTER, Die Vegetationsverhältnisse der illyrischen Länder begreifend Südkroatien, die Quarnero-Inseln, Dalmatien, Bosnien und die Hercegovina, Montenegro, Nordalbanien, den Sandzak Novipazar und Serbien. 8vo, pp. xv + 534, with 6 full page plates, 18 text figures, and 2 maps. Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1901. Subscriber's price M 20, bound M 21.50; separate price M 30, bound M 31.50.

oaks. *Pinus nigra* appears early in rock formations inland ; with this exception there is little in common between the Mediterranean and inland forests. There are great areas of rocky heath inland having the physiognomy but not the floristic features of the heaths near the sea. The inland heath, too, is potentially a forest, while the coastal heath is an expression of the Adriatic climate.

A third section deals with the mountains and many interesting features are here described. There is a decided dominance of xerophytic associations, alpine meadows and similar formations being rare. Magnificent forests of beech, fir, and spruce characterize the lower portions of the mountains, just above the oaks. This forest type is not found on the seaward side of the mountains because of the severe climate, which permits only xerophytic trees like *Pinus nigra* to prosper. The beech approaches the lowlands more than do the spruce and fir, while the latter are more characteristic of the higher mountain districts. Various pines dominate in xerophytic areas. The sub-alpine thicket is composed of pine, juniper, and various other shrubs which form a typical "krummholz." The alpine plants embrace a large number of endemic species, but there are also many widespread forms.

The work concludes with some chapters on the floristic subdivision, history, and relationship of the Illyrian countries. Though the subdivision is purely floristic, rainfall is regarded as the chief distributional factor. The book is well up to the high standard previously set by Willkomm, Pax, and Radde. It is also of peculiar importance since it is the only available work which sums up for general use the broad facts of plant distribution in south-eastern Europe.—H. C. COWLES.

MINOR NOTICES.

KENNETH K. MACKENZIE, assisted by B. F. Bush and others, has published a *Manual of the flora of Jackson county, Missouri*.² It brings together the records of several local floras, beginning with the *Flora of Jackson county* by Mr. Bush in 1882. So far as the reviewer knows, this is the first manual with full descriptions and keys devoted to a single county published in the United States. The advantages of such a manual for local use are very evident, and the students of botany in Jackson county are specially favored. The book is exceptionally well printed, and with its keys, glossary, and indexes is a very complete manual. The summary shows that 1141 species and 51 varieties are included.—J. M. C.

A NEW disease of cultivated bananas near Alexandria, Egypt, has been noted for three years.³ It is characterized by a sudden check of growth, the leaf-points and central leaf blacken and die, putrefaction sets in and proceeds

²8vo, pp. xix + 242. Kansas City, Mo. 1902.

³FAWCETT, WILLIAM, A banana disease. Bull. Bot. Depart. Jamaica IX, 100-105.